LETTERS

ON THE

TRUE RELATIONS

OF

CHURCH AND STATE

TO

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

PRINCETON:
PRINTED BY JOHN T. ROBINSON.

1853.

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[The following letters are re-printed, in order that they may be sent to various persons who have not had an opportunity to see them. It is believed, that the questions discussed are of great moment to the interests of both religion and learning:—and that they merit the attention of all, and especially of those who have any thing to do with the direction of our literary institutions.

The first two letters were published in the Presbyterian Advocate of Pittsburgh, and all of them in the Presbyterian Banner of Philadelphia.]

DR. BROWN TO DR. MACLEAN.

Canonsburgh, Dec. 7th, 1852.

Rev. and Dear Sir.—I take the liberty of writing to you for the purpose of ascertaining your views in relation to the *new policy* which is coming to prevail extensively in our Church, with regard to education and educational institutions.

Were the advocates of Synodical colleges aiming to plant these institutions in those places only where no others worthy of confidence exist, there would be no cause for complaint. But since they seem bent on carrying out their favorite scheme *everywhere*—even in the vicinity of colleges that have always enjoyed the confidence and favor of the Presbyterian church, and which are under the direction of Presbyterians—

and since these institutions must be placed in a false position, and be robbed of many of those important advantages which they had earned by long years of faithful and zealous devotion to the cause of Christian education, it becomes a serious question, what are these institutions to do in these new and embarrassing circumstances?

It seems rather hard that the church for which they have done so much, should array her authority and influence against them.

We are determined, however, at all risks, to stand fast in the liberty which we have heretofore enjoyed. We would, at the same time, be greatly pleased to have the countenance and encouragement of other colleges similarly situated, and especially Princeton.

I shall venture, moreover, to suggest whether this evil was not brought upon us by an influence emanating originally from Princeton, and if so, whether a *counter influence* should not now be put forth *there*, for the purpose of arresting, if possible, the mischief? Our church has already been *saddled* with a number of sickly institutions that had no special claims either upon the church or the public, and which are likely to prove a heavy encumbrance, without contributing in return any substantial benefit.

Should you find it convenient, and deem it worth while to drop me a line expressive of your views and purposes in relation to this subject, you will greatly oblige.

Yours with great respect,

A. B. BROWN.

Rev. John Maclean, D. D.

DR. MACLEAN'S REPLY.

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

Princeton, Dec. 11th, 1852.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have received your favour of the 7th instant; and in a few words I will give you my views in regard to the subject to which it relates, though I am fully aware that they are very imperfect.

Were the erection of colleges within the limits of our church a perfectly novel enterprise, I might have some doubts as to the best mode of founding and carrying on such institutions; but with all the light I have been able to obtain on this subject, I am decidedly of the opinion, that where colleges can be successfully established upon the plan of Jefferson, and of the one here, it is unwise to place them upon any other foundation.

What are the simple facts in regard to both the institutions named?

1st, They are perfectly exempt from any interference from the State authorities, so long as they continue to act within the limits prescribed to them in their respective charters.

2d, They are in the hands and subject to the control of Presbyterian ministers and laymen, as wise, and as judicious as any that could be selected by our church courts,—not to say better than most of our Synods could furnish. And these ministers and laymen are as much devoted to the interests of the Presbyterian Church, as any men could be.

3d, Sound religious instruction, according to our

doctrinal standards, is given in them, and as much probably as is given in any college in the country. There is no attempt to proselyte the youth who belong to other denominations; but as regards matters of faith and practice, the teaching is as full and as free as could be found in any college in the land. Not only are the doctrines of the Bible taught in them, but the Bible itself is a text book and a subject of study. Natural Theology, the Evidences of Christianity, and the Greek Testament, furnish matters of weekly recitation and instruction. Meetings for prayer, and for the reading and expounding of the Scriptures, are as frequent as in any institutions under ecclesiastical control.

4th, There has never been a time in the history of these two colleges, when their friends entertained any apprehension that they would be perverted from their original design, or taken from under their control. During the late struggles in the Presbyterian Church, which institution was regarded as being in the greatest danger, by the now strenuous advocates for colleges under direct ecclesiastical supervision—the *college* or the *seminary* in this place? The one under the care of the General Assembly, the other under the direction of a permanent Board of Trustees, who by their charter are authorized to fill all vacancies occurring in their body, with but one exception—the Governor of the State being ex-officio President of the Board.

5th, *Indirectly*, our church courts *have* a supervision of our two colleges. Reports are made to our Presbyteries and Synods, not indeed formally by our Trustees; but by some of the officers of the colleges, who are members of Synod or Presbytery: and more or

less notice of the condition of the colleges is always taken by these church courts, in their narratives of the state of religion within their bounds. Should our institutions cease to merit the confidence of the churches, our ecclesiastical courts would have it in their power to correct any abuses by simply calling the attention of the college authorities to them, and by adding, if necessary, a declaration, that if the abuses should not be promptly corrected, they will withhold their expression of confidence in the management of the institutions. Our colleges have no such command of funds as would enable them to live, if once deprived of the countenance of our churches and church courts.

6th, It is a fact not to be denied, that our two institutions have done more for the best interests of the Presbyterian Church than any other two colleges in the land; and they have a just right to expect that in their efforts to promote the cause of Christian education, our Synods and Presbyteries shall do nothing, and take no steps that will impair the good name or usefulness of institutions which have rendered them so great service.

In view of the above mentioned facts, I cannot see that it is for the interest of the church or the colleges, that the latter should be placed under the direct control of the former. There is not a benefit to be derived from a college directly under the government of a Synod or Presbytery, that may not be as readily obtained from one upon the plan of the colleges at Canonsburgh and Princeton. But there are *evils* very likely to result from the direct ecclesiastical government of colleges which cannot exist in the case of colleges on the other plan. I speak here of evils to

the church itself. The more important an institution becomes, and the more numerous its endowments and professorships, the greater will be the tendency to form parties, and to lay plans for securing to their respective adherents the more valuable posts. Such divisions and such scheming cannot fail to produce jealousy and distrust among the members. Hard thoughts and hard speeches will be very apt to follow the disappointments which must be experienced by one party or another.

So long as the institution is in a feeble condition, the post of Trustee or of a Professor may be regarded as a matter of little moment, and may be but little sought after; but let either of them become a post of honour, influence, or profit, and there will be no little contention as to the selection to be made.

The less Synods have to do directly with any other matters than those which relate to the government of the church and the proper guarding of its doctrinal instruction, the better for the welfare of the church. By confining themselves as much as possible to what is their more appropriate work, the better will they consult their harmony and usefulness.

Neither is it for the good of such colleges as can sustain themselves, to be altogether under the control of our church courts. Under the direction of a self-perpetuating body of wise and efficient Trustees, there is a far greater security for a full and fair trial of any system of instruction and government which may be adopted by our colleges, than there can be in one under the care of a Synod. Who does not know that the complexion of our Synods and other church courts is continually changing? New ministers and new

elders are to be seen at almost every meeting; and the larger the body and the more numerous the changes, the greater the probability that diversity of views will exist both in regard to the manner in which our colleges should be conducted, and also with respect to the fitness of the persons connected with them for their respective stations. In such a body of men let there be but one man, conscientious it may be, but burdened with a sense of his own wisdom, having little or no respect for the opinions of others—wrong-headed, fault finding, but possessed of talent and learning sufficient to command the attention of some of his brethren—who can estimate the amount of annoyance such an individual would be capable of giving the authorities of the college, whenever its affairs were under the consideration of the Synod or other church court? In a small body of Trustees, elected for life, such a man, if unhappily through some mistake he should be admitted into their number, could do comparatively but little harm. Their deliberations are in private, and his fault-finding will be very likely to go for what it is worth and no more. But in a Synod, without making any direct charge, which could be as directly met and answered, he might by insinuation, by the expression of a doubt, by proposing an inquiry into some matter connected with the discipline or instruction, as if there was something requiring exposure and correction—make a serious thrust at the institution itself, or at those more immediately concerned in its government. In a Synod, everybody has a right to express an opinion; and because they have the right, there are commonly not a few who seem to think that they must be continually exercis-

ing it, no matter what the subject may be; and they are as ready to give their judgment upon the proper management of a college as upon any other topic.

If it can be done lawfully and in good faith to their founders and patrons, it may be well enough for colleges that cannot exist without it, to seek the aid of some Synod, by the surrender of its government. But I do not believe it to be wise for the Synods to permit such parasitical plants to cling to them for support, when that support must be given to them at the expense of others of really greater value to the church at large—not to speak of the injury to the Synods themselves.

Whether it is wiser for the friends of our institutions to remain quiet and wait the result of the present experiment, or to give their views on this subject to the church, I am somewhat in doubt. Their motives might be misapprehended and misrepresented. Yet they have an undoubted right, and perhaps it is their duty, to endeavor to form a more correct public sentiment. If it be deemed best to take any public stand in regard to this matter, I will cheerfully render any service in my power.

You seem to think that the Repertory is in no small degree responsible for the views which we combat; but I am not aware that the Repertory has advocated any such course as the one to which you object. The discussions in that work had respect to church schools as contrasted with State schools, from which to a great degree religious instruction must needs be excluded lest the rights of conscience be invaded. But these discussions had no bearing, at least they were not designed to have, upon the question, whether we

must give up Presbyterian colleges, not nominally but really Presbyterian, for institutions of like kind under the care and control of Synods and Presbyteries. And some of the warmest friends of this latter class of colleges have not had the remotest thought of injuring those on the plan of the colleges at Canonsburgh and Princeton. I do not know that we have a warmer friend of the college in this place than the Rev. Secretary of the Board of Education; but it is possible that even he may not have perceived the whole bearing of this question upon the lasting interests of the church: especially if certain doctrines broached in the Presbyterian some time ago are to be received as true, viz: that such colleges as Jefferson have no right to call upon their old friends for such aid as they may need to carry on their enlarged plan of instruction, if these friends should happen to reside within the limits of a Synod which has taken another college under its special charge—at least until this favored institution has had time to accomplish its own plans, and to cripple other institutions of greater value.

Thus, with many interruptions since I began my letter, and at greater length than I intended when I began to write, have I endeavored to give you my views on this important question; and I shall be glad if anything I have written shall be deemed by you of sufficient importance to merit from you a second thought.

Most respectfully yours,

JOHN MACLEAN.

P. S.—In some remarks in the latter part of the above letter, you will perceive that I have referred to the difficulty between the authorities of Jefferson and Lafayette Colleges, in regard to the collection of funds for Jefferson within the bounds of the Synod of Philadelphia. In that matter, I think Jefferson was right and Lafayette wrong: still I do not wish you to suppose that I entertain any unkind feelings toward Lafayette, or have any apprehension that the revival of that college will be of serious detriment to Princeton. During the administrations of Presidents Junkin and Yeomans, that institution did great service to the church, and I hope will continue to do so. I could wish, indeed, that it had been resuscitated upon its original plan. In this case it might have struggled harder for a time, but ultimately I think it would have acquired greater vigour, and become a greater blessing to the church. That under the administration of its present able and efficient head, and its truly valuable and learned professors, it may prosper above the hopes of its best friends, and be a treasure to the Church of Christ, is my fervent wish and sincere prayer.

I might have said above, and perhaps ought to have done so, that our college was really founded by the Presbyterian Church in this country, and was from the beginning under the fostering care of the Synod of New York, which at the time comprised nearly all the Presbyterian churches, in New Jersey, as well as those in New York. But the Synod very wisely sought to place its government and control upon its present footing, and not to keep it in their own hands.

Mr. Editor:—With your permission, I will avail myself, once more, of the columns of the Banner, to discuss the true relation of the church, and also that of the State, to our Schools and Colleges. That this may be done to the greater advantage, I will mention several points, which I regard as worthy of note, in coming to a final decision of this question. And these points are the following:

1. It is the duty of the Church to make provision for the *religious training* of all the youth within her pale.

This proposition will be readily granted by all with whom I now have any concern.

2. It is the duty of the State to make provision of some kind, for the *civil training* of all the youth under her care.

This I presume will be granted.

3. In order to attain her high aim, the Church must unite the culture of the intellect with her religious teaching: and the State cannot discharge her duty, unless she provides for the right improvement of both heart and head.

Without intelligence as well as piety, youth can never become members of great value to the Church; and without a sense of moral obligation, they can never become valuable members of civil society. The church wants something more than mere babes in piety, and the State cannot hold together, if among the people there be no sense of religion,—and of personal responsibility to God. From this it appears that in this matter of education, the Church and State, to

some extent, occupy common ground, and that no line can be drawn, which shall exactly separate the province of the one from that of the other.

Hence, we also infer, that all education, whether by State or Church, should partake more or less of the religious element.

4. If the civil and religious training can be combined, without detriment to either, it would be wise to unite them.

We can readily conceive of a case, in which there shall be such a uniformity of sentiment, as to civil and religious matters both, that a system of instruction conducted either by the Church or State, would lead to the same result. The people connected with both, and having at heart the highest spiritual welfare as well as the temporal good of their children, would see to it, whether acting by the authority of the State, or by the advice of the Church, that the instruction was in all respects of the right kind and properly given.

And we know it to be a fact, that in some schools, sustained solely by funds received from the State, the school is opened with prayer, or the solemn reading of the Scriptures, or both; and at one school, at least, the children belonging to different denominations, have been required to recite the catechisms of their respective churches.

5. Where either the religious or the civil training would suffer from such combined action, it would be unwise and inexpedient, for the party likely to suffer, to unite its efforts with the other.

Should the State, for example, so conduct her system of public instruction, as to leave out altogether the

religious element, or should she permit erroneous doctrines to be inculcated in the State schools, either by the teachers or by the introduction of improper books; then it would be the duty of the Church to see that other and better provision is made for the instruction of those, over whose spiritual welfare she is called, in the providence of God, to watch. This she can do, either by establishing schools under the direct control of her church courts, or other church authorities, or by encouraging individual members of the church to establish such schools as the Church may need; and to which, with a good conscience, she can give her countenance. Either plan the Church may *lawfully* adopt.

As to what is the wisest or best plan; this is another and distinct question from one respecting the lawfulness of a given plan. Hence, while we would make no objection to the establishment of Parochial schools, by those who think that the object of their establishment cannot be so well attained in any other way; we prefer the plan of encouraging individual members of the church to engage in this work, upon their own responsibility, and to carry it on under the patronage, but not under the control, of our church courts.

On the other hand, should the church in the schools under her care teach unsound morals, or inculcate views, as to civil matters, at variance with those entertained by the civil authorities, and contrary to the fundamental laws of the land, it would be the duty of the State to withdraw its countenance from all such schools. Take the case of Sardinia. Would it be the part of wisdom, or consistent with duty, for that government to surrender to the Jesuits, or other emis-

saries of the Pope, the instruction of the youth of that land? The State authorities entertaining liberal views; the Jesuits and their associates inculcating blind submission to authority, and interfering as far as they dare in civil matters, with the view of bringing every thing into subjection to the ecclesiastical power. Would it be wise in France to confide all the instruction of her children to the Roman Catholic church; the head of which is intriguing at this very moment to subvert the rights of the French people with respect to marriage, under the pretence of guarding the rights of the church? In cases like these, it is the duty of the civil government to provide for the youth under its care suitable schools, in which they would be properly instructed in all matters pertaining to the ordinary affairs of life; and also in their duties as moral and accountable beings.

6. A union of the civil and religious training can be best secured, neither by the State, nor by the Church, assuming the sole control of the public schools; but by committing the whole matter of public education to the care of trust-worthy persons holding the two-fold relation of citizens of the State and of members of the Church; and who should be independent to some extent, at least, both of the Church and State.

By a course of this kind, the State could secure every thing desirable for the State; and at the same time aid the several religious denominations in the attainment of their important aims.

The trustees of the schools being in some instances selected from several different denominations, and in others all selected from a single denomination, they would modify the cause of religious teaching to meet

the views of those whom the trustees represent; and thus enable the youth in the various institutions to acquire the religious culture which the parents would prefer for their children, or with which they would be content; satisfied that, all things considered, it was the best they could reasonably expect to be given at school. Upon no plan whatever could *every* child attend just such a school as its parents or guardians could desire, but on the plan suggested, the religious training, in each given case, would be attended to, as far as practicable; while, at the same time, the children are acquiring the knowledge requisite to make them wholesome members of civil society.

For the common school in any given district, let the people resident in that district select a sufficient number of suitable persons to act for them: and let the persons so chosen prescribe the course of instruction in the common school; and direct what religious exercises and teaching shall take place in the school. As the condition of its aid in maintaining the school, the State should merely require, that the teachers be competent, and that no children be excluded from the privileges of the school, on account of their own religious sentiments, or those of their parents. If the several churches are satisfied with the extent and character of the religious teaching, let them give their countenance to the school; and in this way, without interference with the rights of conscience, and without any direct joint action, both the State and the Church may aid in that all important work of training the youth of our land.

Where in any given district there is a decided ascendency in number of any particular denomination,

there might be some disposition to push the religious teaching to an extent, that would be annoying to the minds of the few who do not agree with the majority in their religious belief. Yet on the whole it would be better to run the risk of this being done occasionally, than to encounter all the mischief that must inevitably result from the entire neglect of religious instruction, in our common schools. Should a case of the kind supposed now and then occur, it would be a serious question as to whether the children of the minority should forego the advantages of the school in other respects, rather than run the risk of having their religious opinions modified or wholly changed; and it would be a question which the parents must decide for their children.

To our apprehension, it would be better in some cases, for the children to be kept from the common school, than to subject them, on the one hand, to the danger of unsound religious teaching; or to expose them, on the other, to the evil of being practically taught, that religion has nothing to do with the ordinary affairs of life. It is the interest of the State as well as the interest of the Church, that the youth should be taught to believe and feel, that the highest of all duties, is to love and fear God: yet, in laying down principles to guide a community in matters of education, it would be impossible for any man, or set of men, to devise a scheme that would be free from all objection. Our aim, therefore, must be to adopt a system that shall combine in itself the greatest amount of good to the entire community, with the least degree of interference with individual rights.

Most of the remarks under this head have been

made in reference to a state of things in which it was supposed, that there might be a concurrent action on the part of the State with the Church, without any direct union or co-operation of the two. Where no such action can be had, it is obviously the duty of the State, and of the Church, to pursue each its separate course, with all possible energy and discretion.

In regard to institutions of a higher order, the separate aims of the State and of the Church, can be readily attained, by adopting the course suggested, and which, in fact, is the very plan that has been in operation, in this country almost from its first settlement. The State has authorized the establishment of Colleges, and placed them under the control of men enjoying the confidence of the communities in which they reside, and committed to these men and their successors the entire direction of affairs, subject only to such restrictions as may be necessary to prevent an abuse of their trust. And the practical result has been, that the various religious denominations have acquired more or less of a controlling influence over these institutions, through the trustees, who in the first instance were appointed at the suggestion, and upon the petition of those who applied for the charters. In some cases the control is direct, in others indirect. For reasons given in a previous letter, I deem the indirect supervision of the Church better than the direct, whether respect be had to the church or to the college.

Such has been the liberality of the State in granting charters for colleges, that no body of men capable of sustaining one has failed to obtain the requisite authority to do so: and so numerous are the colleges

and universities, and of such diversified character are they as to the religious sentiments taught in them, that no one can well be at a loss to find an institution, in accordance with his views of what a college should be.

Our colleges may be classed under three heads.

1. Colleges, under the direct control of the State authorities.

2. Colleges, under the direct control of some ecclesiastical body.

3. Colleges not under the direct control of either State or Church.

This 3d class may be sub-divided into two.

1st. Colleges whose trustees belong to one denomination, and which were established and sustained by their friends and patrons, with a special reference to the instruction of the youth of that denomination.

2d. Colleges whose trustees were at the first chosen from different denominations, and with the avowed design of teaching only those religious tenets, held in common by the different denominations united in sustaining said colleges.

So far as religious teaching is concerned, the first of these can meet all the reasonable demands of those who are the zealous advocates of church colleges; and the second can do all that the friends of the State colleges could ask. And as there is happily among us no difference of opinion as to the best form of civil government, and as to the rights of conscience, either of them could impart all the instruction which it is the duty of the State to furnish.

If this be so, these two subdivisions of colleges may well be regarded as all-sufficient for the purpose of

Church and State: the first being adapted more fully to the wants of the Church, and the second to the wants of the State.

In most of our State Colleges, provision is now made, to some extent, for the religious instruction of the students; and, perhaps, sufficiently so to meet the wants of the State. But this arrangement is liable to two objections:

1st. That the character of the instruction given is constantly liable to change; and

2d. The State, for the time being, allies herself to one class of religionists to the exclusion of the others; and just so far as she does this, she may be said to interfere with the rights of conscience; and were there no other colleges but those under the control of the State, this would be a very serious objection to them; and, as things are, it is not without weight. State institutions supported, to a great extent, by funds received from the State are able to carry on a competition, that in many cases must prove ruinous to other colleges; and just so far as this is done, it prevents the different religious denominations from furnishing to the youth in their churches the moral and mental training they would wish them to have. Whereas, if all our colleges were independent, to some extent, of both Church and State, as all our older colleges are, and yet under the patronage of one or more religious denominations, the youths belonging to the different sects could be suited with just that kind of training which is deemed best for them by their parents. At the same time, the State would not be liable to the charge of favouring particular sects, or of interfering with the rights of conscience; and yet her duty in

the matter of education would be discharged, and her aim attained in the way least exceptionable. As before remarked, no plan can secure precisely the same advantages to every individual. A school-house and a college cannot be placed next door to every man's dwelling: nor can a court-house, nor can a church. All we can hope to effect is to secure the greatest amount of good for the community as a whole, with the least possible interference with the rights of the individuals composing that community.

This should be the aim of the State, and this is the true expression of her relation to our schools and colleges.

As to the Church, it is the duty of each branch of it to have a special watch over the youth belonging to that branch: but in making provision for the religious training of its own children, it should not be regardless of the best interests of those not under its immediate care. On the contrary, each branch of the Church, in all its arrangements should seek to promote the best good of the whole community. All therefore that any branch of the Church should demand of our schools and colleges is, that proper provision be made for the union of so much religious teaching with instruction in secular things, as will effectually aid said church in accomplishing her schemes for the complete religious training of her youth, and tend to promote the sound doctrinal instructions of all other young persons, who can be brought within the reach of these schools and colleges.

The true relation, then, of the Church to our schools and colleges, is not to govern them; but to foster and

encourage them, in their efforts to promote intelligence and piety among the youth of our land.

Should the schools and colleges already established fail to do this, then let the Church withdraw her countenance from them, and give it to others that will. If, in given cases, she cannot secure the establishment of such schools and colleges, without taking the direct oversight of them, let her do this, not as being the best plan, nor as indicative of the true relation of the Church to schools and colleges in a normal state of things, but as expedient in a given emergency.

Were it at this day an altogether open question as to the best mode of conducting our schools and colleges, I believe it would be wise to organize them all in accordance with the views given above. But as in most, if not in all the States of our Union, provision is made for the support of common schools, by the State, it becomes a practical question, what course should the Protestant churches pursue in regard to these State schools? In reply to this question, I should say, that so long as in these common schools, the Bible is reverently read; and the instruction given in them, on moral and religious subjects is sound and Scriptural, it would be wise for the churches to encourage these schools, and not give them up entirely to the control of those who care nothing for religion.

We are not disposed to favour the views of the Romanists, or of those Protestants who agree with them in opinion, that the Church should have the whole direction of the education of our youth; and that, too, in matters purely secular, as well as on the subject of religion. Nor are we disposed to interfere

with the present common school arrangements of the several States, where the schools are properly conducted, or even to withdraw from all connexion with them, so long as we can exert a wholesome influence over them.

Very respectfully, yours,

JOHN MACLEAN.

CHEAP SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENTS FOR COLLEGES.

The extension of the means of education, so as to place them fairly within the reach of the largest possible proportion of our population, is of course a very great *desideratum;* and one towards which all the characteristics of our age and our country are pointing, not only as a desideratum, but a necessity. It may, indeed, be questioned, whether more is not expected from popular education, especially if religion is to be eliminated from its primary stages, than will be realized. But this is not our present question.

While therefore, we earnestly desire the extension of education, or in other words, the cheapening of education to the poor, we yet hold it to be in the last degree important, that we should not thereby deteriorate its quality. If the alternative were to carry the culture of those who can afford to purchase it, to a higher point on the one hand, or to diffuse a lower range of education equally among a greater number, on the other, a strong plea might be made in favour of the latter course. But if the real alternative be to depreciate the standard of our higher education for all classes alike, in order to bring it equally within the reach of all,—if, in other words, the tendency of our measures is to drag down the level of our collegiate training, already far too low for our true interests, then we cannot hesitate to regard the result as an evil on the whole. And in expressing this conviction, we

suppose ourselves to be speaking the common sentiment of every enlightened friend of education and of man, in the land. This is the great objection to the undue multiplication of colleges. More men might thereby receive a so called collegiate education; but no man can doubt, that the deterioration consequent upon this extension of its superficial area, would be a great evil to the scholarship of the whole country. While every thing is done that can be done wisely, to extend education among the masses of the people, let us never cease to labour with equal zeal, to lift up the standard of our higher education, for the common benefit of all. Let us be careful not to array in antagonism, interests that should ever run parallel. There is no reason why our charity to the poor, should take the form of injustice to the rich, or rather of injury to the whole.

Now it seems to us, that some of the current schemes of education, and among them that for endowing colleges by means of cheap scholarships, not only are in danger of working that result, but that the result is inevitably involved in the plan. We believe the success of the scheme to be the certain precursor of a depreciation in the standard of our collegiate training; and as such to be an evil and not a good in the end. Let the grounds of this apprehension be carefully and candidly weighed; and if they are in error, let that error be pointed out with equal candor.

1. The first ground, then, on which we question the wisdom of this method of endowment is, that it seems to us to involve a serious and inevitable deterioration of the standard of our college scholarship.

Every one familiar with the practical working of a

college, knows that constant and thorough recitations are indispensable to its efficiency. Every good teacher knows by experience, that there are two conditions essential to the successful working of the method; viz: 1, That the mind of the teacher should be imbued with that quickening, energizing, developing power, which belongs in full measure only to men of a higher order of qualification,—men of clear, strong, gifted, well-trained, well-informed mind; and 2d, That the mind of the teacher so gifted, so trained and furnished, and so alive with energizing power, should be brought into constant and living contact with the minds of his pupils. We are constantly seeing cases, where the teacher fails as a teacher, for the want of intellectual force, and inspiring enthusiasm, quite as much as for the want of ripe and thorough scholarship. Few men comparatively seem to have those personal qualities, which go to make up the evidence of a vocation to teach. And then, whatever a man's qualifications may be, they will be in a great measure unfruitful, without constant and close contact with the pupil. This latter truth establishes a necessary relation between the number of teachers and students, in all effective college training. This point has not received in this country the attention it deserves. A vague impression prevails among us, that a fixed corps of teachers must be maintained, and then an almost indefinite number of students can be taught, without much additional expense. This impression, we think, underlies the endowment scheme we are discussing. When we have urged upon its advocates, that the amount of these scholarships is utterly inadequate to the proper instruction of so many students, as they

call for, we have uniformly received for answer: First, that many of the scholarships will fail to be filled; and thus the number of students will in reality be much less than the number of scholarships;—and secondly, that the sum fixed for the endowment, will enable them to support a full corps of teachers, and then they can educate as many as may come.

Our reply is, that if the first of these allegations be true, the morality of the inducement, by which the money is procured, is thereby set in a very questionable light. And besides, it is a question whether those who take scholarships mainly because they are cheap, or in other words, because they are a profitable investment, are likely to be deprived of their promised profits, by allowing them in general to go by default. And if any one should rejoin to this reasoning, that the money is given, not as a good investment, but as a charitable donation to the cause of education, we have only to say, let them try the experiment of raising fifty or a hundred thousand dollars on that ground, and they will at once settle the question.

But our main object is with the other allegation. And our reply to that, is, that it is all a mistake. There is no fixed corps of instructors, for an indefinite number of students. We maintain on the ground of experience, that for every increase of students, above a certain and very limited number, there must be a corresponding increase of Professors; or the instruction will become at once comparatively inefficient and fruitless. To imagine otherwise, we are perfectly persuaded, is to practice an illusion on ourselves; and to represent otherwise to the donors, is to give pledges,

that no ability and no faithfulness, will enable us to redeem.

We repeat that the method of instruction mainly relied upon in all the colleges in the land, supposes a fixed numerical ratio between the professors and the students. For every increase of the one, there must be a corresponding increase of the other. The proportion most favorable to effective teaching, has not yet been carefully or finally determined. In Germany where the system is pushed to its highest efficiency in the gymnasium, (answering to our American Colleges,) the average proportion is about one teacher to every ten pupils. In our own country, the proportion, or rather disproportion, is much greater than this. In our best furnished institutions, it would probably average about one to twenty. In any computation we are able to make, in the case of institutions endowed by scholarships, ranging as they do from 25 dollars for an individual, to $100 for a family, the disproportion can hardly be less than one teacher to forty or fifty pupils. And this, we maintain, experience has shown, to be wholly insufficient. There is no first class, or even second class institution in the world, so far as we know, where this, or any thing like this disproportion obtains.

Much may be done by dividing the classes into sections for drill; but it is impossible for four or five men having the responsibility of sustaining as many separate departments on a creditable level, to go through the daily drudgery of thorough drilling in each of those departments on a scale like this. The thing is physically impossible.

There are but two alternatives. The one is to go

on with inefficient recitations, conducted by a few able men, crippled by their fewness; the other is to increase their corps of teachers, by dismissing them, and securing in their place, a greater number of inferior, and therefore cheaper men. Either alternative, it seems to us, will insure the result we have stated.

An endowment of $100,000 in the form of scholarships of $100 each, would give a thousand students. If only one out of five of these scholarships should be filled at one time, it would give the institution 200 students. If every dollar of the endowment were collected and safely invested, it would yield less than half the income, annually expended in the instruction of that number of students, in any first class college in the land. To suppose that our collegiate education can be cheapened to that extent, without deterioration, is to charge all our older colleges, with a degree of extortion, not many removes from swindling.

A second general ground of objection to the scheme we are discussing is, that it is likely to interfere injuriously with the prosperity of other colleges. The fundamental feature of this mode of endowment, is, that it aims to draw students to its halls, by underbidding the common rates of tuition. The great inducement it holds out to purchase its scholarships, is, not that its teaching is better, but that it costs less than half the amount of tuition, charged in other institutions. If it be true that the ordinary rates of college education are double what they should be, this, of course, is righteous and fair. But if it be founded in error, the result cannot fail to be evil wherever its influence is felt.

But farther, it is well known that while local and

personal preferences, and still more the prospect of a better education, may determine the choice of a college in the majority of cases, yet there are in every community, those who will feel the force of economical motives, over this class of inducements. It may be regarded as certain, therefore, that a portion of the students destined for other institutions, will be drawn off by the lure of a cheaper education. And this in its turn cannot fail to curtail to some extent, the resources, and so cripple the strength of such institutions. If only a few of their students should be withdrawn by this means, it may compel them to reduce their corps of instructors, and so deteriorate the thoroughness of their teaching. It is the liability to this disastrous result, which gives other institutions and the friends of a higher education, the right of remonstrance ; and even makes it their duty to meddle with the new experiment, because it first and inevitably meddles with them.

3. It strikes us that this scheme of endowment will operate injuriously on our preparatory schools and academies.

We take for granted, that no good classical school in the land, can afford to teach for the rates proposed in these endowment-scholarships. And besides, there will always be a temptation to hurry boys from the academy, and crowd them into college, because their parents or other friends hold scholarships there, which release them from any farther expense for tuition. The difficulty is already pressing on our best teachers, of retaining their students long enough, to give them any thing like a thorough drilling in the elements of Classical and English studies. This propensity can

only be held in check, by colleges keeping up their standard of requirement, and insisting as an absolute condition of admission to their classes, that every student shall be thoroughly prepared. It is a disgrace to our higher education, that these elementary branches are so imperfectly mastered, and that our classical and philosophical attainments so commonly stand through life, just where they are left at college, chiefly for want of sufficient familiarity with the grammar and construction of the classic tongues, and the elements of science, to make their farther prosecution pleasant. Now, it seems to us to be in the last degree unwise, to stimulate this undue haste to enter college, by an inducement in the shape of cheap scholarships; and to increase the difficulty and the delicacy of holding it in check, on the part of the faculty, by placing in the hands of parents and guardians, a pecuniary obligation for the tuition applied for. No one who has any experience in such cases, we think, can doubt, that it will throw a powerful make-weight in favour of receiving all merely doubtful cases; while the interests of education, and the highest influence and usefulness of the learned professions, make it eminently desirable, that the doubt in such cases should be given on the other side.

4. We submit, that the principle appealed to in procuring subscriptions to these endowments, renders it probable—and we are satisfied from observation the fact will turn out to be so,—that young men will be sent to college, on the strength of these scholarships, and ultimately get into the learned professions, who have not only no suitable training, but no adequate intellectual gifts or moral fitness, for professional life.

Whatever training and mental furniture they may receive, may be a personal benefit to them; but if it should have the effect of crowding into the institution, a mass of students, whom the best corps of instructors in the land, could not make scholars of a high order, and finally of flooding the country with them, as ministers, physicians, lawyers, and legislators, no personal benefits to them, could ever atone for the resulting evils.

Must we then abandon the scheme of reducing the cost of education to the poorer classes? By no means. The drift of our argument, if it has any validity, goes to show, that this object cannot be accomplished, by merely reducing the price of tuition. It may be fairly assumed, that the cost of college teaching, settled by a long experience, cannot be tampered with without damage; unless some method can be devised, like those in mechanics, which cheapen the power, or shorten the process by which the work is done.

There still remain, however, the old long tried methods, which, for aught that appears, are capable of indefinite expansion, and are therefore both safe and sufficient.

1. Our Collegiate Institutions may be endowed, like our Theological Seminaries, so as to furnish gratuitous instruction to all who are qualified to receive it; or they may be partially endowed, so as to bring the cost of an education within the reach of all classes alike, as in Scotland and in Europe generally.

2. Scholarships may be founded on a scale of sufficient liberality, to furnish ample facilities for the highest possible training; and these scholarships may easily be prevented from dragging down the standard of

our collegiate education, and even made the instrument of raising it still higher, and of stimulating the vigorous and healthy emulation of academies and preparatory schools, by throwing these scholarships open to competition, and bestowing their avails as a reward of faithful and successful study. It may well be made a question, whether it is wise in any case, to vest the ownership of scholarships in the hands of donors. It can hardly fail to give them both a moral and a pecuniary influence in the settlement of questions, which ought to be exclusively determined on other grounds, and by other parties.

3. And finally, The principle on which our Board of Education was originally founded, and until recently administered, exemplifies still another, and on some accounts, we think, a more purely Christian mode of meeting the case; allowing, as it does, a more direct and personal administration of the Christian charities of the benevolent donor, in the payment of the educational expenses of the receiver. There is no sufficient reason apparent to us, why this principle should not be applied on a wider scale, instead of confining it exclusively to the case of ministerial education: and this, we are glad to say, has actually been done by our Board of Education, in the case of young men preparing to become professional teachers. But this is aside from our present object; which is, not to discuss the whole question of College Endowments, but to state the grounds of our apprehensions, in regard to the recent method of Endowment by means of Cheap Scholarships.

M. B. HOPE.

PRINCETON, N. J., Aug. 12, 1853.

POSTSCRIPT.

The above letter was not published, when the reprinting of the other letters was begun: and for this reason no reference is made to it upon the title page of the pamphlet. As it discusses a kindred subject of great moment to the interests of our Colleges, I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to append it to the letters written by Dr. Brown and myself.

J. M.